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Partners of Americas

Indiana, USA - Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

January - April 2008

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President's Report

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Mark your Calendar!

Oct. 25, 2008
Indiana POA Annual Mtg
Fishers Library Community
Center

Nov. 20-23, 2008
International Festival
Indiana Fairgrounds

Feb 22, 2009
Feijoada Fun '09!
Fishers Library Community
Center

Hope to see you at one or more
of these events!

Tchau for now!



AGUAS DE MARÇO

Rainy, dreary April rain. A good time to reflect and plan.

I am excited to be incoming President of Indiana Partners as we evaluate and plan for Indiana Partners future in the 21st Century. Partners of the Americas began over 40 years ago as a companion to President Kennedy's Alliance for Progress. Indiana-Rio Grande do Sul was one of the earliest Partnerships.

Since 1965, IN-RS project visitors have created a rich tapestry of relationships from agricultural breeders and Rotarians to gospel choirs and government leaders, Pan Am athletes and students to social workers, nurses, and others. Recently, the IN-RS Youth Ambassadors Program model was adopted by the US State Department for use throughout Latin America.

Now, as Brazil becomes a top tier world economy, US foreign policy funding diminishes, and work and lifestyles in the US impose new limits on volunteer availability, it is time to re-evaluate our Indiana Partners goals, objectives, and the operations that make volunteer, people-to-people outreach and exchange so meaningful.

The International Partners organization began re-evaluating in 2007, introducing a New Annual Meeting Congress of Partnership Delegates to more fully give voice to our chapters. I was fortunate to attend the New Leadership Training, Annual Meeting, and International Conference in Ouro Preto, Brazil, along with Elaine Shenkel and Nara Finco (RS Board members) and Jerry Karwowski (IN Partners).

Our Indiana Partnership leadership is acting on the challenge of reinventing and revitalization:

- January - approved a resolution to consider regional cooperation and conference;
- February - sponsored a Feijoada for members, RS visitors, Youth Ambassadors;
- April - initiates a new Partners newsletter
- April - begins development of a 3-year strategic plan as guide in the new era
- May - expecting a visit by RS Partners President Marlene Lomando to collaborate on the biannual program plan.

In borrowing my article's title from the famous song by Brazilian Elis Regina, "Aguas do Março" I offer the thought and wish embodied in Elis's music that the March rains ultimately bring the promise of all we desire to grow and prosper. ("são os Aguas de Março com a promessa de tudo no meu coração"). In this busy time, I

hope all of you will share views with Board members and, especially Marlene during her visit, to help us on the path to renewal and growth.

Jhani Laopus, President, Indiana Partners of Americas

Feijoada Fun!

By Bill Fuller

The third Brazilian Feijoada party sponsored by the Indiana Partners of Americas is now in the history books. Approximately 100 state-wide group came from Muncie, Anderson, Lafayette, Terre Haute and Indianapolis to assemble at the Fishers Community Center Hamilton County Library for the event.

Coming toward the end of the two-month stay by six young people from Rio Grande do Sul participating the Partners Youth Program, the annual event brings together the Brazilian kids, who have been dispersed around the state for most of the year by Partners members and host families for an afternoon of food and fun.

The party features conversation, reports by leaders, entertainment by the visiting youths and a typical Brazilian farm lunch - event was planned by a committee headed by Jane Gehlhausen include Kathy Kaiser and Andres LeLong. The meal, catered by the Fishers Community Center, consisted of black beans cooked with meat, Kale, orange slices, fried casava, and farofa. Among the beverages available to the guests were Guarana, a typical Brazilian soft drink.

The Youth Ambassador's Program, in its 16th year, has provided home stays for a two-month period to approximately 100 young people from Rio Grande do Sul. Several Hoosier teenagers have spent similar periods in Rio Grande do Sul.

Mark your calendar for the 2009 Feijoada -- Sunday, February 22, 2009!



Photos from left to right:

- Bill Fuller, left, received a special Partners watch (shown) for his years of service. With Bill are his wife Lou and son Jim.
- Taking advantage of the opportunity, Judith Roepke chats with President Jhani Laopus while Jim Nulty and Hugh Stephens wait their turn.
- Lou Fuller gets a spoonful of farofa to go with the meat and beans.

Teacher Visits



Danuza with kids at Head Start

By Leslie Barrett

Although the year is in its first quarter, 2008 has already brought Indiana two energetic RS F teachers, Danuza Guimarais and Juliana Augustin. Danuza's area of interest is pre-school/early childhood instruction, and she runs an English program for young children in Porto Alegre. In Indiana, she works at elementary schools, universities, and children's language programs (mostly ESL) in Indianapolis, as well as VSAI in Indianapolis. Danuza also had the opportunity to see a two-year old grandchild of Hal and Judith Roepke and to shop for teachers' supplies.

Juliana Augustin has an interest in both English language teaching and in the care of at-risk children in the foster care system. Her visit included Terre Haute, Lafayette, and Indianapolis, and she was able to visit elementary school homes, and offices of social services like CASA. She was also able to attend the Feijoada and the February meeting of the Indiana Partners of Americas and to explore possibilities of graduate work in Indiana.

Partners is grateful to many people and organizations for their generous hospitality during these visits. In return, I know that we made great experiences for the people they met.

2008 Northbound Youth Group - Trip Highlights

By Leslie Barrett



Every year Indiana Partners hosts six youth from the Rio Grande do Sul partnership. With the new Youth exchange initiated by RS Partners to instill a more significant leadership and volunteerism program, I felt that this year's group to be one of the strongest we have hosted in a long time, and learned how fast their two-month stay can be.

My family was lucky enough to host Nathan Lima. Nathan has a passion for astronomy, so much of a passion, in fact, that after he turned around the next day and traveled to the Brazilian National Astronomy Olympiad. While he was in Indiana, we had a bravebraved the cold evening to watch the event and to see his first 'man in the moon', which doesn't appear from the Southern Hemisphere.

Another thing Nathan learned about was food. While he doesn't eat breakfast in Brazil, he started loving breakfast here, especially our Saturday pancakes. We butters for him to decide his favorite, and he took home several jars of the winner, Skippy extra chunky.

Terre Haute was also fortunate to have Gabriel Polycarpo, hosted by Phoebe Koehler and Tom Derrick. Gabriel is an accomplished musician (violin, guitar, and with the Porto Alegre Orchestra. In Indiana he played with the Terre Haute Symphonetta as well as the orchestra at Terre Haute South Vigo High School. His humor "Gabriel would come with that kid grin of his as if he'd just heard a great joke and say "Phoebe, do you have an expression "Okey Dokey?" I'd explain and he'd burgeoning lexicon as delighted as if I'd just given him a coupon for free French fries. He was fascinated with American idioms and collected them with the avid anthropologist. His amusement amused us as we tried to explain why or where these expressions came from. A great game for all of us."

Ana Claudia Barreta lived in Muncie with Ricardo R. Fernandez & Cecilia Peralta. Ricardo writes, "Driving around Indiana at dusk, Ana Claudia the many lighted windows that could be seen in a large number of homes. Thinking that she had mistaken them for candles, I explained that these were instead made to look like candles, probably intended to give these rural homes a more traditional, "old-fashioned," "old country" feeling and appearance. Being an anthropologist known better!... Ana Claudia's question was not related to technology, but to ideology: she thought that these many candles were indicative of an Afro-Christian religion the one over 30 million Brazilians adhere to!... After a brief explanation--and a good laugh!--about our respective mistakes, we both overcame our initial ethnographic pleasure of knowing a little bit more about each other's culture than we had a few minutes earlier."

Cecilia adds, "One thing that Ana did that will change us forever was spoil our cats. She slept with the cats; the mother cat had babies on her bed. Now Ana is looking for her and trying to get into our beds."

"Ana also did a wonderful presentation for Center for Aging at BSU which made us proud. She presented for over an hour on Brazil, with a very nice powerpoint, feijoada and dessert to 35 people."

Christopher & Geraldine Airriess in Muncie hosted Lucas Patesco, the Group Leader and a basketball player/athlete, had a thorough immersion into Indiana basketball Muncie Burris team and presented an outstanding role model to younger students.

Indianapolis also hosted two students this year: Flavia Vedana, hosted by Jerry and Terry Karwowsky was a vivacious spokesperson from Rio Grande do Sul in that Jerry arranged for her, including the Kiwanis Intl Youth Awards. Active in sports in Brazil, she had a great time volunteering as a Volleyball coach.

Eduardo Bestetti, hosted by Andy and Kim Jacobs, made an amazing transition from his Brazilian school of 300 students to one of the largest Indiana high schools growing up in Brazil in the small city of Ijuí, he learned to navigate not only busy corridors and crowds but the US meaning of "multicultural" and he had some fascinating observe the American political process at the grass roots with his host father, a former Congressman. Eduardo made, perhaps, the most impressive single volunteer amazed everyone, parents and students, by working a continuous 18-hr day for the Choral music festival and competition which includes hosting thousands of students a major fundraising event for the North Central High School choral programs he participated in. Eduardo will long be remembered for his perseverance and wry, ironic students in laughter.

More stories told by the teens themselves are on Nathan's and Gabriel's Blogs, which are linked on our website at <http://www.bsu.edu/web/indpartners/youthexchange>

As I said at the beginning, the group in 2008 was wonderful, but the program seems to get stronger every year. If you know people who would make good hosts give them the above link.

We are currently planning for a southbound group to go to RS in June for approximately four weeks. Applications may be downloaded from the same link just above come up with a new name for this program to replace the old "Youth Ambassadors," which is now used by the Ambassador to Brazil for a different program. Any LeslieBarratt @indstate.edu.

Sincerely Yours, the Indiana Partners of Americas

Mission: To work together as citizen volunteers from Indiana & Rio Grande do Sul to increase mutual understanding and to improve the lives of people in our two states through nonpolitical, community based exchanges & other activities focused on educational, economic & social development.

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